

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 were previously pending in the present application. The present Amendment cancels claim 3. Thus, upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 1 and 2 will remain pending.

The specification has been objected to for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Claims 1 and 2 have correspondingly been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for failing to comply with the written description requirement. The objection and rejection are both directed to the language that describes the distribution of the claimed particles on the front surface of the porous mat body. Applicant respectfully submits that the present amendment to claim 1 sufficiently addresses this concern, and requests that the objection to the specification, and the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claims 1-2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,501,783, to Hiragami et al. (Hiragami), in view of GB Pat. No. 1,247,373 (The '373 Patent) and United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0111406 to Kwak et al. (Kwak), as evidenced by the Kirk article attached to the Office Action. Claim 1 is independent. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1 recites a spread mat. The spread mat comprises, *inter alia*, an adhesive agent spray-formed on a front surface of the porous mat body such that the adhesive agent is attached to front portions of filaments of a porous mat body. The spread mat further comprises particles attached to the front portions of the filaments through the adhesive agent.

Hiragami discloses a non-slip floor material that comprises a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) matrix layer 1 having synthetic resin particles 2 dispersed therein. (Abstract) The matrix layer 1 is attached to a backing 3, which can comprise non-foamed plastics, or woven or nonwoven fabric of organic or inorganic fiber. (col. 2, l. 65-69) The '373

Patent is directed to a method of making a mat 14 that comprises polymeric filaments.
(col. 1, l. 12-35)

The Office Action acknowledges that Hiragami fails to disclose or suggest a mat body containing stacked and looped resin filaments, as required by claim 1, and attempts to cure this deficiency by substituting the filaments of the '373 Patent for the backing layer of Hiragami. Even assuming, *arguendo*, that this combination of references is proper, it still fails to disclose or suggest the spread mat of claim 1.

The PVC matrix layer 1 of Hiragami, which the Office Action cites as reading on the claimed adhesive, is formed by mixing the PVC and resin particles 2 at an elevated temperature, and extruding them into the sheet or layer 1. (col. 2, l. 1-14, 59-64) The backing layer 3 can be laminated to the PVC matrix layer 1 (col. 2, l. 67), or alternatively, according to the Office Action, mat 14 of the '373 Patent can as well. Claim 1 requires, however, that the adhesive be spray-formed on a front surface of the porous mat body, in contrast to the matrix layer 1 of Hiragami that is a continuous extruded sheet.

This difference highlights an important structural difference between the spread mat of claim 1, and the structure disclosed by the combination of Hiragami and the '373 Patent. As shown in Figs. 1 and 2 of the present application, when the claimed adhesive is spray-formed on the front surface of the porous mat body, it does not form a continuous sheet or layer over the mat body containing the stacked and looped filaments. The adhesive is only attached to the front portions of the filaments, and does not cover the pores formed between the filaments. The structure disclosed by Hiragami in view of the '373 Patent, by contrast, shows a continuous sheet or layer 1 disposed over a mat 14, which covers any pores between the filaments of mat 14 of the '373 Patent. This is because the layer 1 of Hiragami is formed with calender rolls or extrusion, and not spray-formed, as required by the adhesive of claim 1.

In addition, claim 1 recites particles attached to the front portions of the filaments

though the adhesive agent. Again, the structure created by the combination of Hiragami and the '373 Patent fails to disclose or suggest this feature. In Hiragami, as seen in Fig. 2, the particles 2 are embedded or disposed within the matrix layer 1. The particles 2 are not attached to the front portions of the backing 3, and consequently would not be attached to any front portions of mat 14, as required by the particles and front portions of the filaments of claim 1.

This feature of claim 1 contributes to an improved slip-prevention capability over what is disclosed in Hiragami and the '373 patent. The pressing, shaping, and extrusion technique described for layer 1 in Hiragami tends to provide a very flat sheet, so that the embedded particles are only slightly raised from the surface of the PVC material. The particles 2 themselves may also become misshapen and deformed during production, due to the high temperature at which layer 1 is prepared. Neither of these drawbacks occur with the spread mat of claim 1.

Kwak and the Kirk article fail to cure the above-described deficiencies of Hiragami and the '373 Patent to disclose or suggest the spread mat of claim 1, and are not relied on by the Office Action to do so. Kwak is merely relied on for an aliphatic polyester for plasticizing PVC. The Kirk article is relied on for a formula to convert mesh values to particle size.

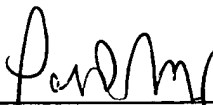
Therefore, claim 1 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hiragami in view of the '373 Patent and Kwak, as evidenced by the Kirk article, as is claim 2, which depends therefrom. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such action is solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicant's attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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